



THE STATE OF ARIZONA
GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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February 14, 2011

The Honorable Jeff Flake U.S. House of Representatives
240 Cannon House Office Building
Washington D.C. 20515

To the Honorable Jeff Flake,

The Arizona Game and Fish Department's (AZGFD) review of the proposed House Budget Continuing Resolution HR1 has revealed a perhaps unintended bolstering of recent alarming trends to federalize wildlife conservation while marginalizing the historically critical role of the states' conservation efforts. The reduction eliminates funding for Fiscal Year 11 for State Wildlife Grants (SWG) and North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). This same resolution would severely limit the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Land Acquisition Fund.

We were dismayed to see that the majority of the proposed budget cuts would affect funds that are provided to ensure the state has a voice in conservation of wildlife, while the federal portion of the FWS's budget for Resource Management remains intact. The targeted grant programs were specifically designed to ensure the state's involvement in these federal processes that are otherwise regulated by federal laws, including the Endangered Species Act (Act or ESA) and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), and loss of funding will result in a complete shift in the balance of management of all species managed under these Acts to the federal government.

We cannot overstate the significance or the potential consequences of allowing these reductions to eliminate the state's involvement in these programs, creating an imbalance that will federalize even further the conservation of non hunted and fished species and migratory birds. Both of these Acts, but specifically the ESA, can and do have an enormous financial impact to the state. We feel that this balance shift will not only impact the future management of those species, but that it will directly result in significant impacts to the state's economy due initially to the loss of the funding and, in the long-term, due to the state not having a voice related to their management.

This would be extremely detrimental to the state's interests and in the case of Section 6 grants, may be contrary to the ESA itself, which requires that the federal government cooperate with the states to the fullest extent practicable. While the funding amount has never been sufficient to meet the state's needs that result from the ESA, elimination of the funds would result in federalization of the program and the ongoing management of the 26 Endangered, 12 Threatened and 18 Candidate species currently found within our state. The above-mentioned grants are the only federal mechanism designed to ensure the state has a voice at the table regarding these federal laws that have a significant impact on Arizona's resources.

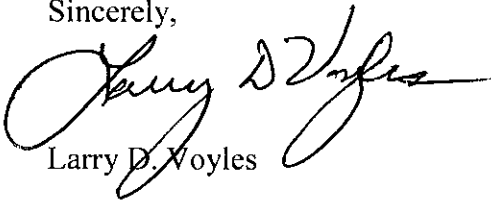
Jeff Flake
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The affected programs are currently budgeted to bring well over 2 million dollars into Arizona's economy this year alone, and conservatively support more than 40 jobs within our state. These are not federal employees, but state employees, private contractors, and non-governmental organization positions. These grants also support a multitude of non-consumptive wildlife recreational activities, which also support countless jobs throughout our state.

Without these funds, the state will not be able to maintain a seat at the management table for such species as the Mexican wolf, Gunnison's and black-tailed prairie dog, and black-footed ferret, just to name a few. Each time a new endangered species is listed it relegates the states' authorities to the federal agencies. Without AZGFD representing the state's interests as the voice of reason at the table, litigious interest groups and federal agencies will have even greater influence on Arizona's wildlife, land use, and water policy decisions. Arizona will be less able to gather biological data and knowledge that is critical to fighting misuse of the ESA to gain control over Arizonans' land, water and wildlife resources. As a result of these proposed cuts, the federal government will assume a greater role in managing Arizona's wildlife. This could result in more restrictions on renewable energy, home, and business development, without the benefit of state involvement in those decisions.

I therefore strongly urge you to keep intact the state portion of the federal funding for the grants listed. Information regarding the benefits of the highly successful SWG, NAWCA and Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation grant programs is attached. Members of the public as well as a member of my staff are already scheduled to meet with you in early March to discuss the value of these programs. However, given the urgency of this matter, I will be contacting you to meet with you personally to discuss the criticality of funding for these programs. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry D. Voyles", with a stylized, flowing script.

Larry D. Voyles
cc: Senator Kyl
Senator McCain

Enclosures



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

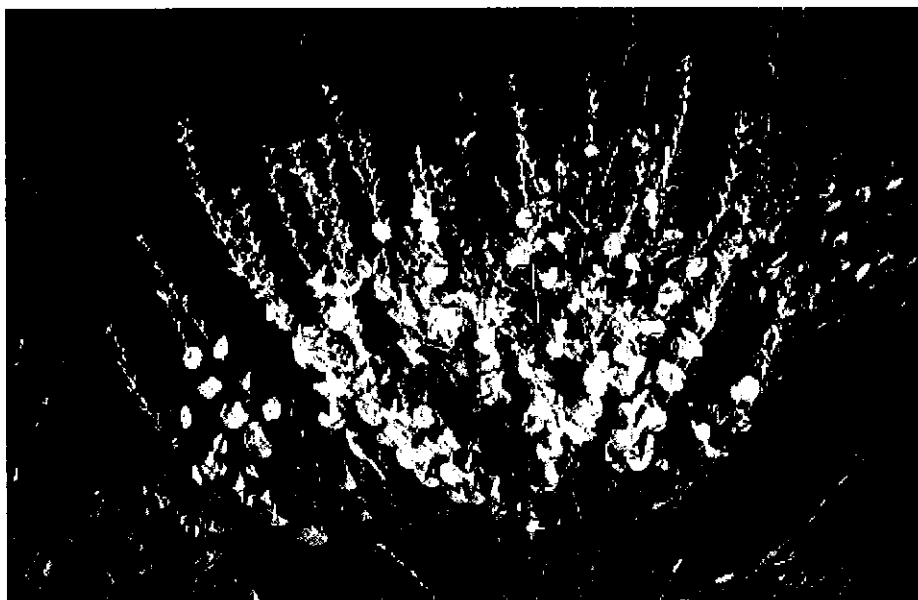
Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund Grants

(Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act)

Because more than half of all species currently listed as endangered or threatened spend at least part of their life cycle on privately owned lands, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) recognizes that success in conserving species will ultimately depend on working cooperatively with landowners, communities, and Tribes to foster voluntary stewardship efforts on private lands. States play a key role in catalyzing these efforts.

A variety of tools are available under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) to help States and landowners plan and implement projects to conserve species. One of the tools, the *Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund* (section 6 of the ESA) provides grants to States and Territories to participate in a wide array of voluntary conservation projects for candidate, proposed, and listed species. The program provides funding to States and Territories for species and habitat conservation actions on non-Federal lands. States and Territories must contribute a minimum non-Federal match of 25% of the estimated program costs of approved projects, or 10% when two or more States or Territories implement a joint project. A State or Territory must currently have, or enter into, a cooperative agreement with the Secretary of the Interior to receive grants. Most States and Territories have entered into these agreements for both plant and animal species.

The FWS awarded approximately \$67 million in Federal funding in FY 2009 under four grant programs that are available through the Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund:



Section 6 funding has helped fragile ecosystems and the species that depend on them, such as the endangered hairy rattlesnake. Photo credit Georgia DNR

Conservation Grants (\$10 M)

provide financial assistance to States and Territories to implement conservation projects for listed species and at-risk species. Funded activities include habitat restoration, species status surveys, public education and outreach, captive propagation and reintroduction, nesting surveys, genetic studies, and development of management plans.

Habitat Conservation Planning Assistance Grants (\$7.6 M)

provide funds to States and Territories to support the development of Habitat Conservation Plans (HCPs) through support of baseline surveys and inventories, document preparation, outreach, and similar planning activities.

HCP Land Acquisition Grants (\$36 M)

provide funding to States and Territories to acquire land associated with approved HCPs. Grants do not fund the mitigation required of an HCP permittee; instead, they support conservation actions by the State or local governments that complement mitigation.

Recovery Land Acquisition Grants

(\$14.1 M) provide funds to States and Territories for acquisition of habitat for endangered and threatened species in support of draft and approved recovery plans. Acquisition of habitat to secure long-term protection is often an essential element of a comprehensive recovery effort for a listed species.

Regional Office Boundaries

Region One — Pacific

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Eastside Federal Complex
911 N.E. 11th Avenue
Portland, OR 97232-4181
Program Contact: Heather Hollis,
503/231-2372

Region Two — Southwest

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
500 Gold Avenue SW, Room 4012
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Program Contact: Vanessa Sanchez,
505/248-5420

Region Three — Great Lakes – Big Rivers

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bishop Henry Whipple Federal Building
One Federal Drive
Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4056
Program Contact: Peter Fasbender,
612/713-5343

Region Four — Southeast

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 200
Atlanta, GA 30345
Program Contact: Kelly Bibb,
404/679-7132 OR
David Dell, 404/679-7313

Region Five — Northeast

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
300 Westgate Center Drive
Hadley, MA 01035-9589
Program Contact: Alison Whitlock,
413/253-8536

Region Six — Mountain-Prairie

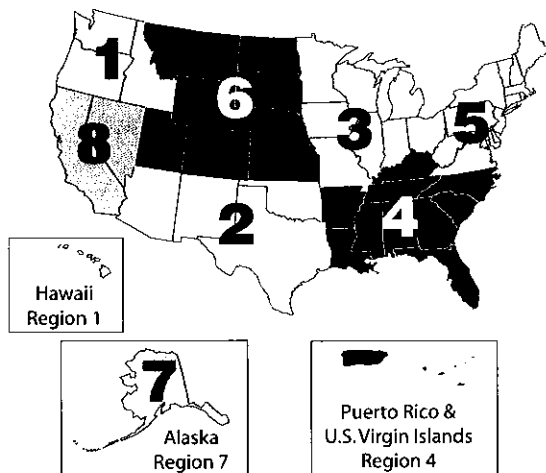
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
134 Union Blvd., Suite 645
Lakewood, CO 80228
Program Contact: Amelia Orton-Palmer,
303/236-4211

Region Seven — Alaska

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1011 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99503-6199
Program Contact: Judy Jacobs
907/786-3472

Region Eight — California and Nevada

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Federal Building
2800 Cottage Way, Room W-2606
Sacramento, CA 95825-1846
Program Contact: Diane Elam,
916/414-6464



Section 6 funding has helped States provide unfragmented habitats for imperiled species including the grizzly bear. The purchased habitat will help meet the recovery goals for this species by providing critical connectivity of landscapes and long-term protection. Photo Credit - Dr. Christopher Servheen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Contact Us

For more information on how to apply for Federal grants to assist States, Territories, and landowners in conserving species on non-Federal lands, please contact the FWS Regional office from the list below with responsibility for the State or Territory in which the proposed project would occur:

Additional information is also available at <http://www.fws.gov/endangered/grants/section6/index.html> You may also access www.grants.gov and search the site using the program title Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund or by the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number 15.615.

**U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Endangered Species Program
Branch of State Grants, Don Morgan
4401 N. Fairfax Drive, Room 420
Arlington, VA 22203
703-358-2171
<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/>
July 2009**

State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program Merits

- In FY10, the **State and Tribal Wildlife Grants** program was funded at \$90M of which \$72M was apportioned (~\$1.2M per state/territory)
- The program is the nation's core program for preventing future endangered species listings and is used to implement voluntary conservation actions to stabilize declining fish & wildlife populations. More than 12,000 species are considered to be at-risk of becoming endangered in the US.
- There is wide agreement amongst stakeholders (conservation groups, business owners, farmers, ranchers, etc.) that proactive action is preferred over more endangered species listings
- The program leverages tens of millions of dollars from state and private sources each year
- **The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants** program is the principal source of funding for implementation of State Wildlife Action Plans.
 - Development of State Wildlife Action Plans was mandated by Congress in 2000 and are in place in every state and territory. In a nationwide poll, nearly 80% of voters favored creation of the plans and 84% support directing federal resources to the plans.
 - State Wildlife Action Plans are non-regulatory, incentive-based and developed in collaboration with state and federal agencies, conservation groups and private citizens to ensure that actions taken on the ground are acceptable, practical and benefit working landscapes.
 - Loss of the program would significantly curtail or end implementation of Wildlife Action Plans
- The **State and Tribal Wildlife Grants** program directly supports jobs in every state and territory. The program employs professional biologists who use the best available science to lessen the impacts of development and other threats on fish and wildlife and use technical assistance to help private landowners and land management agencies implement voluntary conservation measures.
- The program directly benefits the economy allowing states to hire local labor (i.e. heavy equipment operators, contractors, universities, etc.) to restore habitat that leads to improved fish and wildlife populations and environmental conditions. Conservation jobs typically have a higher ratio of jobs created per dollars spent than infrastructure-related jobs such as road construction¹.
- The **State and Tribal Wildlife Grants** program is supported by over 6,300 organizations and businesses that make up the national Teaming with Wildlife coalition. This coalition is considered one of the largest and most diverse conservation coalitions ever assembled. A complete list of the coalition's members is available at www.teaming.com.
- The **State and Tribal Wildlife Grants** program has greatly improved states capacity to conserve the full array of species that are held in public trust by state and federal agencies consistent with the North American Model of Conservation. The program has restored some balance to fish and wildlife conservation funding which has been disproportionately carried by fee-paying hunters and anglers.
- The State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program will save taxpayer dollars by conserving fish and wildlife before they become more costly (and controversial) to conserve as endangered species.
- Examples of how the State Wildlife Grants Program is addressing priority conservation needs in every state and territory can be found at <http://www.wildlifeactionplans.org/>

¹ **How Infrastructure Investments Support the U.S. Economy**

Pollin, Robert | Heintz, James | Garrett-Peltier, Heidi | 1/16/2009

Download 1.6 MB

North American Wetlands Conservation Act

The North American Wetlands Conservation Act (Act, or NAWCA) of 1989 provides matching grants to organizations and individuals who have developed partnerships to carry out wetlands conservation projects in the United States, Canada, and Mexico for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds and other wildlife. There is a Standard and a Small Grants Program. Both are competitive grants programs and require that grant requests be matched by partner contributions at no less than a 1-to-1 ratio. Funds from U.S. Federal sources may contribute towards a project, but are not eligible as match.

The Standard Grants Program supports projects in Canada, the United States, and Mexico that involve long-term protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands and associated uplands habitats. In Mexico, partners may also conduct projects involving technical training, environmental education and outreach, organizational infrastructure development, and sustainable-use studies.

The Small Grants Program operates only in the United States; it supports the same type of projects and adheres to the same selection criteria and administrative guidelines as the U.S. Standard Grants Program. However, project activities are usually smaller in scope and involve fewer project dollars. Grant requests may not exceed \$75,000, and funding priority is given to grantees or partners new to the Act's Grants Program.

History

The Act was passed, in part, to support activities under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, an international agreement that provides a strategy for the long-term protection of wetlands and associated uplands habitats needed by waterfowl and other migratory birds in North America. In December 2002, Congress reauthorized the Act and expanded its scope to include the conservation of all habitats and birds associated with wetlands ecosystems. In 2006, Congress reauthorized the Act to extend its appropriation authorization of up to \$75 million per year to 2012.

Current Funding

The Congressional appropriation to fund the Act's Grants Program in FY 2010 is \$47,647,000. Additional program funding comes from fines, penalties, and forfeitures collected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918; from Federal fuel excise taxes on small gasoline engines, as directed by amendments to the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act of 1950, to benefit coastal ecosystem projects; and from interest accrued on the fund established under the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937. In FY2010 these other sources provided almost \$42 million in additional grant funds.

Accomplishments

From September 1990 through September 2009, some 4,000 partners in 1943 projects have received more than \$1 billion in grants. They have contributed another \$2.06 billion in matching funds to affect 25.2 million acres of habitat and \$1.16 billion in non-matching funds to affect 217,350 acres of habitat.

Potential Benefits of NAWCA/NAWMP Projects

Agriculture – The agriculture industry has had and continues to have the greatest impact on wetlands and wetland conservation and will have the greatest benefit by expanding its involvement in NAWCA/NAWMP, whose NAWCA funded conservation activities can continue to directly benefit by assisting agricultural partners in:

- offsetting effects of climate change on agriculture production
- conserving water to support agriculture use
- helping industry and landowners realize carbon offset credit opportunities

- assisting in realizing opportunities under the U.S. Farm Bill

Forestry – The habitat of forest ecosystems supports habitats for a variety of wildlife and plants. The forestry industry largely operates on public lands through various forms of land tenure and harvesting rights. Conveyed in these rights is the obligation on the part of the industry to achieve sustainable forest management and operate in a manner that ensures long-term environmental health. Our forests play an important role in climate change and carbon sequestration. Becoming a NAWCA/NAWMP partner would directly benefit this industry by:

- supporting sustainable forest management goals, strategies, plans, research and applied science
- playing a role in maintaining industry access to resources and long term fiber security
- helping gain public support for the industry
- playing a valuable role in achieving environmental and product certification -benefiting market access
- providing science and support to development of operating guidelines and best management practices
- providing support and complement industry stewardship activities

Energy Sector – Oil and gas, utility, coal, wind and mining industries operating on public and private lands directly and indirectly affect wetland ecosystems through land disturbance, and use, storage and discharge of water. A NAWCA/NAWMP partnership could assist by:

- providing wetland data and science to assist environmental impact assessments
- supporting on-site habitat management efforts
- assisting in gaining public/community/regulator support for operations
- benefiting marketplace positioning
- mitigating and/or off-setting impacts associated with development

Other Bird and Habitat Conservation Initiatives – Conservationists concerned about other migratory bird groups—landbirds, shorebirds, colonial waterbirds—saw the success of the Plan model and adopted it as they developed strategies for species of concern. Rather than reinvent the wheel, they looked to the joint ventures to help implement their plans. Within their established geographic areas, the habitat joint ventures, when possible, have integrated the conservation of shorebirds, landbirds, and other waterbirds into their planning processes. Established bird and habitat conservation plans and active watershed groups can benefit from establishing or continuing partnership with NAWCA/NAWMP through:

- providing strong watershed data and research
- generating and maintaining ecological goods and services to support viable and prosperous communities
- watershed planning, project assistance, monitoring and reporting
- providing access to grants for work projects

Cities/Municipalities – While necessary, urban growth has significant impacts on wetlands and wildlife habitats. Responsible planning, citizen stewardship and site engineering can mitigate some of these effects. A NAWCA/NAWMP partnership can assist in these efforts through:

- assisting with water storage, storm-water management, sewage treatment and water treatment efforts
- generating and maintaining ecological goods and services that support prosperous communities
- assisting in community development and environmental planning
- complementing environmental stewardship programs and activities